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262 which the root, or rather lower stem, is eaten by the Indians, and is succulent and juicy, with a pleasant taste. The boys and girls soon brought a large supply into the toldos. The
881 day after our arrival in this place, the attainment of the age of puberty of one of the girls was celebrated according to custom. Early in the morning the father of the child informed the cacique of the event, the cacique thereupon officially communicated the intelligence to the acting doctor or medicine-man, and a considerable shouting was set up, while the doctor adorned himself with white paint and was bled in
881 the forehead and arms with a sharp bodkin. The women
346 immediately set to work to sew a number of 'mandils' together. When the patchwork was finished, it was taken with pomp and ceremony by a band of young men, who marched round the poles—already fixed to form a temporary toldo—singing, whilst the women joined in with the most dismal incantations and howlings. After marching round several times, the covering was drawn over the poles, and lances were stuck in front, adorned with bells, streamers, and brass plates that shook and rattled in the breeze, the whole thing when erected presenting a very gay appearance (its Indian name literally meaning 'The pretty house'). The
881 girl was then placed in an inner part of the tent, where nobody was admitted. After this everybody mounted, and some were selected to bring up the horses, out of which certain mares and fillies were chosen, and brought up in front of the showy toldo, where they were knocked on the head by a ball—thus saving the blood (which was secured in
[262] pots) to be cooked, being considered a great delicacy. It is a rule amongst the Indians that any one assisting to take off the hide of a slaughtered mare is entitled to a piece of meat, but the flesh was on this occasion distributed pretty equally all round. Whilst the meat was cooking, Casimiro, who was
881 ruler of the feast, sent a message for me to come to Crimé's
252 toldo, where I found him busy working at a saddle, in the construction of which he was, by the way, an adept. His

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THE "PRETTY HOUSE" AND DANCE.

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